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International Law Documents

## NEUTRALISATION

### CONVENTION RELATING TO THE NON-FORTIFICATION AND NEUTRALISATION OF THE AALAND ISLANDS, SIGNED AT GENEVA, OCTOBER 20, 1921<sup>10</sup>

[Official text in French. The registration of this convention took place April 6, 1922]

The President of Germany, His Majesty the King of Denmark and of Iceland, the Head of State of the Esthonian Republic, The President of the Republic of Finland, the President of the French Republic, His Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, His Majesty the King of Italy, the Head of State of the Republic of Latvia, the Head of the Polish State, and His Majesty the King of Sweden, having agreed to carry out the recommendation formulated by the Council of the League of Nations in its Resolution of June 24, 1921, that a Convention should be concluded between the interested Powers with a view to the non-fortification and neutralisation of the Aaland Islands in order that these islands may never become a cause of danger from the military point of view;

Have resolved for this purpose to supplement without prejudice thereto, the obligations assumed by Russia in the Convention of March 30, 1856, regarding the Aaland Islands, annexed to Treaty of Paris of the same date;

And have appointed the following as their plenipotentiaries:

(Names of plenipotentiaries)

Who, having deposited their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed upon the following provisions:

#### ARTICLE 1

Finland, confirming, for her part, as far as necessary, the declaration made by Russia in the Convention of March 30, 1856, regarding the Aaland Islands, annexed to the Treaty of Paris of the same date, undertakes not to fortify that part of the Finnish Archipelago which is called "the Aaland Islands."

#### ARTICLE 2

I. The name "Aaland Islands" in the present Convention includes all the islands, islets and reefs situated in the stretch of sea bounded by the following lines:

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<sup>10</sup> 1922, League of Nations, Treaty Series, Vol. IX, p. 213.

(a) On the North by the parallel of latitude  $60^{\circ} 41'$  north;  
 (b) On the East by the straight lines joining successively the following geographical points:

|      |   |
|------|---|
| (1)  | Lat. $60^{\circ} 41'.0$ N. and long. $21^{\circ} 00'.0$ E. of Greenwich |
| (2)  | " $60^{\circ} 35'.9$ N. " " $21^{\circ} 06'.9$ E. " "                   |
| (3)  | " $60^{\circ} 33'.3$ N. " " $21^{\circ} 08'.6$ E. " "                   |
| (4)  | " $60^{\circ} 15'.8$ N. " " $21^{\circ} 05'.5$ E. " "                   |
| (5)  | " $60^{\circ} 11'.4$ N. " " $21^{\circ} 00'.4$ E. " "                   |
| (6)  | " $60^{\circ} 09'.4$ N. " " $21^{\circ} 01'.2$ E. " "                   |
| (7)  | " $60^{\circ} 05'.5$ N. " " $21^{\circ} 04'.3$ E. " "                   |
| (8)  | " $60^{\circ} 01'.1$ N. " " $21^{\circ} 11'.3$ E. " "                   |
| (9)  | " $59^{\circ} 59'.0$ N. " " $21^{\circ} 08'.3$ E. " "                   |
| (10) | " $59^{\circ} 53'.0$ N. " " $21^{\circ} 20'.0$ E. " "                   |
| (11) | " $59^{\circ} 48'.5$ N. " " $21^{\circ} 20'.0$ E. " "                   |
| (12) | " $59^{\circ} 27'.0$ N. " " $20^{\circ} 46'.3$ E. " "                   |

(c) On the South by the parallel of latitude  $59^{\circ} 27'$  North;  
 (d) On the West by the straight lines joining successively the following geographical points:

|      |   |
|------|---|
| (13) | Lat. $59^{\circ} 27'.0$ N. and long. $20^{\circ} 09'.7$ E. of Greenwich |
| (14) | " $59^{\circ} 47'.8$ N. " " $19^{\circ} 40'.0$ E. " "                   |
| (15) | " $60^{\circ} 11'.8$ N. " " $19^{\circ} 05'.5$ E. " "                   |
| (16) | Middle of Market rock   |
| (17) | " $60^{\circ} 18'.4$ N. " " $19^{\circ} 08'.5$ E. " "                   |
| (18) | " $60^{\circ} 41'.0$ N. " " $19^{\circ} 14'.4$ E. " "                   |

The lines joining points 14, 15 and 16 are those fixed by "the Topographical Description of the Frontier between the Kingdom of Sweden and the Russian Empire in accordance with the demarcation of the year 1810, corrected to conform with the revision of 1888."

The position of all the points mentioned in this Article is generally taken from the British Admiralty map No. 2297, dated 1872 (corrected up to August 1921); but for greater precision the position of points 1 to 11 is taken from the following maps; Finnish maps No. 32, 1921, No. 29, 1920, and Russian map No. 742, 1916 (corrected in March 1916).

A copy of each of these maps is deposited with the Secretariat of the League of Nations.

II. The territorial waters of the Aaland Islands are considered to extend for a distance of three marine miles from the low-water mark on the islands, islets and reefs not permanently submerged, delimited above; nevertheless, these waters shall at no point extend beyond the lines fixed in § I of this Article.

III. The whole of the islands, islets and reefs delimited in paragraph I and of the territorial waters defined in paragraph II constitute the zone to which the following Articles apply.



## ARTICLE 3

No military or naval establishment or base of operations, no military aircraft establishment or base of operations, and no other installation used for war purposes shall be maintained or set up in the zone described in Article 2.

## ARTICLE 4

Except as provided in Article 7, no military, naval or air force of any Power shall enter or remain in the zone described in Article 2; the manufacture, import, transport and re-export of arms and implements of war in this zone are strictly forbidden.

The following provisions shall, however, be applied in time of peace:

(a) In addition to the regular police force necessary to maintain public order and security in the zone, in conformity with the general provisions in force in the Finnish Republic, Finland may, if exceptional circumstances demand, send into the zone and keep there temporarily such other armed forces as shall be strictly necessary for the maintenance of order.

(b) Finland also reserves the right for one or two of her light surface warships to visit the islands from time to time. These warships may then anchor temporarily in the waters of the islands. Apart from these ships, Finland may, if important special circumstances demand, send into the waters of the zone and keep there temporarily other surface ships, which must in no case exceed a total displacement of 6,000 tons.

The right to enter the archipelago and to anchor there temporarily cannot be granted by the Finnish Government to more than one warship of any other Power at a time.

(c) Finland may fly her military or naval aircraft over the zone, but, except in cases of *force majeure*, landing there is prohibited.

## ARTICLE 5

The prohibition to send warships into the zone described in Article 2 or to station them there shall not prejudice the freedom of innocent passage through the territorial waters. Such passage shall continue to be governed by the international rules and usages in force.

## ARTICLE 6

In time of war, the zone described in Article 2 shall be considered as a neutral zone and shall not, directly or indirectly, be used for any purpose connected with military operations.

Nevertheless, in the event of a war affecting the Baltic Sea, Finland shall have the right, in order to assure respect for the neutrality of the Aaland Islands, temporarily to lay mines in the territorial waters of these islands and for this purpose to take such measures of a maritime nature as are strictly necessary.

In such a case Finland shall at once refer the matter to the Council of the League of Nations.

#### ARTICLE 7

I. In order to render effective the guarantee provided in the Preamble of the present Convention, the High Contracting Parties shall apply, individually or jointly, to the Council of the League of Nations, asking that body to decide upon the measures to be taken either to assure the observance of the provisions of this Convention or to put a stop to any violation thereof.

The High Contracting Parties undertake to assist in the measures which the Council of the League of Nations may decide upon for this purpose.

When, for the purposes of this undertaking, the Council is called upon to make a decision under the above conditions, it will invite the Powers which are parties to the present Convention, whether Members of the League or not, to sit on the Council. The vote of the representative of the Power accused of having violated the provisions of this Convention shall not be necessary to constitute the unanimity required for the Council's decision.

If unanimity cannot be obtained, each of the High Contracting Parties shall be entitled to take any measures which the Council by a two-thirds majority recommends, the vote of the representative of the Power accused of having violated the provisions of this Convention not being counted.

II. If the neutrality of the zone should be imperilled by a sudden attack either against the Aaland Islands or across them against the Finnish mainland, Finland shall take the necessary measures in the zone to check and repulse the aggressor until such time as the High Contracting Parties shall in conformity with the provisions of this Convention, be in a position to intervene to enforce respect for the neutrality of the islands.

Finland shall refer the matter immediately to the Council.

#### ARTICLE 8

The provisions of this Convention shall remain in force in spite of any changes that may take place in the present *status quo* in the Baltic Sea.



## ARTICLE 9

The Council of the League of Nations is requested to inform the Members of the League of the text of this Convention, in order that the legal status of the Aaland Islands, an integral part of the Republic of Finland, as defined by the provisions of this Convention, may, in the interests of general peace, be respected by all as part of the actual rules of conduct among Governments.

With the unanimous consent of the High Contracting Parties, this Convention may be submitted to any non-signatory Power whose accession may in future appear desirable, with a view to the formal adherence of such Power.

## ARTICLE 10

This Convention shall be ratified. The protocol of the first deposit of ratification shall be drawn up as soon as the majority of the signatory Powers, including Finland and Sweden, are in a position to deposit their ratification.

The Convention shall come into force for each signatory or acceding Power immediately on the deposit of such Power's ratification or instrument of accession.

Deposit of ratification shall take place at Geneva with the Secretariat of the League of Nations, and any future instruments of accession shall also be deposited there.

In faith whereof the plenipotentiaries have signed this Convention and have annexed their seals thereto.

Done at Geneva, on the twentieth day of October, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-one, in a single copy, which shall remain in the Archives of the Secretariat of the League of Nations. A certified copy shall be sent by the Secretariat to each of the signatory Powers.

(Signatures of plenipotentiaries)